
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2020

Present: Councillors Taggart (Chair), Mitchell (Vice-Chair), J Baillie, Chaloner, Guthrie, Laurent and Mintoff

11. **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE WHISTLEBLOWING COMPLAINT WITHIN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES IN SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL AND LEARNING REPORT**

The Panel considered the report of the Chief Executive regarding an investigation into the whistle blowing complaint within Children's Social Care Services.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Children and Learning; Sandy Hopkins, Chief Executive; Grainne Siggins, Acting Director of Children's Services; John Harrison, Executive Director Finance and Commercialism; Sarita Riley, Service Lead – Legal Services Partnership; Derek Wiles, Head of Education and Learning; Julian Watkins, Interim Head of Service - Safeguarding and Phil Bullingham, Head of Service - Children's Social Care were present and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussion with officers and the Cabinet Member the Panel noted that a step change was needed across the department and that improved transparency and reporting would be required to provide assurance to the Panel that the implementation of the improvement plan would be effective.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the updated governance structure chart, which included the role of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel, would be circulated to the Panel.
- (ii) That, until the Panel decided otherwise, progress in the delivery of the Ofsted Improvement Plan would be included as an agenda item for each future meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel. The report would include specific reference to progress against the action plan developed in response to the Learning Report.
- (iii) That the key outcomes of the meetings to be held under points two, three, eight and nine, of recommendation two of the draft action plan, identified below, would be shared with the Panel after said meetings have been held. This would be incorporated into the progress reporting identified above.
 - a. Monthly safeguarding assurance visit to one service by Executive Director for Children & Learning Services and the Lead Councillor to review performance and listen to the experiences of front-line staff;
 - b. Bi-annual safeguarding assurance meeting to take place between the Chief Executive, the Leader, Lead Councillor and the Executive Director for Children & Learning Services to discuss successes, challenges, pressures and concerns;

- c. A quarterly meeting to be established between the Chief Executive and the Principal Social Worker to ensure a direct connection with front line practitioners;
- d. Executive Management Board meeting every six months to review whole council approach to embedding outcomes for children & young people in the city.

12. **CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director, Finance and Commercialism, providing the Panel with an overview of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Children and Learning; John Harrison, Executive Director, Finance and Commercialism; Grainne Siggins, Acting Director of Children's Services; Julian Watkins, Interim Head of Service – Safeguarding; Phil Bullingham, Head of Service - Children's Social Care and Sarita Riley, Service Lead – Legal Services Partnership were present and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

Following a discussion with officers and the Cabinet Member the Panel requested oversight of the revised Improvement Plan prior to submission to Ofsted.

RESOLVED that the revised Improvement Plan be presented to the 1 October 2020 meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel.